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Archeological Assistance Program

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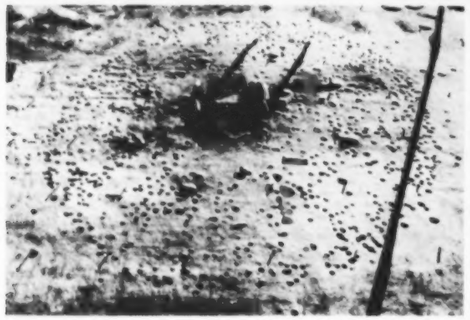

Archeological remains of the Chota townhouse, Tellico Archeological Project, Tennessee. Since 1933 the Tennessee Valley Authority and Federal agencies have joined to sponsor archeological work. Study of the Tellico Reservoir areas began in 1967 with help from the National Park Service.

LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

Prior to World War II, the major Federal support for archeology was through the Smithsonian Institution, the Tennessee Valley Authority, and the National Park Service. At the end of the war, in 1945, Congress began appropriating funds for the construction of numerous dams and water resource projects throughout the nation. American archeologists realized that the construction activities and the resulting reservoir impoundments would obliterate many potentially important archeological sites unless surveys and excavations were begun immediately.

To help organize the surveys, the National Park Service, the Smithsonian Institution, the Bureau of Reclamation, and the Corps of Engineers initiated the Interagency Archeological Salvage Program. Even though the National Park Service was the coordinating agency of the program from the beginning, over time more than fifty universities, colleges, and museums, as well as the Smithsonian Institution contributed personnel, facilities, and resources to assist with salvage operations in many water control projects.

The National Park Service's participation in the salvage program was based on the *Antiquities Act of 1906 (Public Law 59-209)* and the *Historic Sites Act of 1935 (Public Law 74-292)*. The Antiquities Act made the Secretary of the Interior responsible for protecting prehistoric and historic ruins, monuments, and objects on Federal lands, a duty he delegated to the Director of the National Park Service. The Historic Sites Act empowered the Secretary of the Interior, through the National Park Service, to carry out a new national policy of preserving historic sites, buildings, and objects of national significance for public use. It also authorized the Service to conduct surveys, and secure and preserve data on historic sites, publish studies, and otherwise encourage the preservation of historic properties on non-Federal lands.

With passage of the *Reservoir Salvage Act (Public Law 86-523)* in 1960, the Secretary of the Interior received the added responsibility of preserving archeological data that might be lost specifically through dam and reservoir construction. The *Archeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-291)* extended application of the Reservoir Salvage Act to include the preservation of scientific, prehistoric, historic, and archeological data in *all* Federal or Federally assisted or licensed construction projects such as pipeline or sewer construction, power transmissions facility development, airport construction, and so forth.

The 1974 legislation also made the Secretary of the Interior accountable for ensuring a relatively uniform Federal data recovery program. The law requires all Federal agencies to seek future appropriations, obligate available monies, or reprogram existing funds for recovery, protection, and preservation activities. They can also transfer a maximum of one percent of the total amount for each project to the Secretary of the Interior.

The *Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979* supplemented the 1906 Antiquities Act. It set forth permit procedures for Federal land managers to follow in archeological work on public and Indian lands and established severe penalties for violations of the Act. The legislation also encouraged cooperation among professional and amateur archaeologists and the Federal government, and created a major role for Indian tribes in controlling archeological resources on their lands.

OTHER PERTINENT LEGISLATION

One of the most important historic preservation laws is the *National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665)*, which calls for an expanded National Register of Historic Places to include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. It broadened Federal historic preservation policy by encouraging State and local governments as well as private individuals to preserve archeological or historic remains of national, State, or local significance.

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act is especially relevant to American archeology. It requires that all prehistoric and historic properties listed or eligible for listing in the National Register be considered before funding is approved or any license is issued, whichever the case may be, on any project that might damage or destroy such cultural resources. No Federal project affecting a National Register property may proceed until the President's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, also established by the 1966 Act, has an opportunity to comment on it.

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Survey of the Taos/Denver to Fort Laramie Freight Road (ca. 1854-1870), Peacekeeper Program, Wyoming. Though minimally threatened, historic roads and trails along an Air Force cable corridor were fully recorded in order to preserve data and assess impacts.

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In May 1971, *Executive Order 11593* was issued as a complement to the National Historic Preservation Act. It directs Federal agencies to assume a leadership role in preservation by surveying and nominating to the National Register all significant properties within their jurisdiction, and by asking the Secretary of the Interior to determine whether any property in the environmental impact area of their actions is eligible for inclusion in the National Register. Moreover, the Secretary of the Interior is to develop and disseminate to Federal, State, and local governmental units information on methods and techniques for preserving, restoring, stabilizing, or maintaining historic properties.

The Federal government's lead role in protecting archeological and other cultural resources was reaffirmed in the *1980 Amendments to the National Historic Preservation Act*. They codified the portion of Executive Order 11593 that required Federal agencies to locate, inventory, and nominate all significant historic properties to the National Register. Also, they allowed agencies to spend more than one percent of project funds for archeological data recovery if they received prior permission from the Secretary of the Interior, and to use regular program funds for preservation activities authorized by the Act.

Clearly, throughout all the legislation described, Congress has intended that Federal agencies fulfill their legal responsibilities prior to impacting archeological resources. The processes required provide ample opportunity to explore and support the potential for "preservation in place" and to determine whether archeological excavation is necessary. They also allow time for maximum professional review of data recovery plans should an archeological investigation be conducted. Thus, Federal agencies cannot apply Public Law 93-291, which calls for the recovery of important archeologica data, until *after* they identify cultural resources threatened by their projects or policies and conclude that preservation is neither prudent nor feasible.

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Excavation around a brick dry well, Telfair Site, Savannah National Historic Landmark District, Georgia. Urban archeology coordinated by the National Park Service prior to building construction by the General Services Administration represents one of the newer efforts by Federal agencies to preserve cultural resources.

DEPARTMENTAL CONSULTING ARCHEOLOGIST

- Coordinates the national Federal Archeology program and promotes public and professional understanding of it.
- Provides management and professional leadership in the field of archeology to the Department.
- Sets forth policies and procedures for Federal agencies to enable them to fulfill their archeological responsibilities.
- Develops strategies, programs, and activities to carry out the mission of the office.
- Monitors all Federal archeological data recovery activities to ensure uniform actions and efforts.
- Oversees the Federal archeology permit program and makes final decisions on disagreements over permit issuances.
- Coordinates information collections necessary for mandated reports to Congress.

PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

Although the basic principles of resource preservation of the National Park Service's archeological assistance program have remained intact through the years, evolution of the program has resulted in changes in emphasis to respond to varying program needs. Management responsibility for the program is vested in the Assistant Director for Archeology, who also serves as the Departmental Consulting Archeologist.

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ARCHEOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE DIVISION

The Archeological Assistance Division of the National Park Service is part of the Cultural Resources program. The division's Washington office:

* Implements national archeological goals and objectives by working closely with other Federal agencies.
* Following established policies, develops standards and guidelines for Federal agencies to use in administering their archeological programs.
* Coordinates the Federal archeological permit program, which regulates archeological and paleontological investigations on public and Indian lands.
* Helps Federal agencies locate, identify, and evaluate prehistoric and historic properties under their jurisdiction or control.
* Investigates notification that important archeological data are being destroyed by Federal agency activities.
* Maintains a nationwide automated data system on Federal archeological activities required by the Archeological Resources Protection Act and other legislation.
* Reports annually to Congress on the scope and effect of program areas including permits, enforcement, and training.
* Reviews all archeological nominations and determinations of eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places.
* Develops regulations, guidelines and information bulletins dealing with archeological matters in the National Register of Historic Places.
* Provides training to States and Federal agencies on the preparation of archeological nominations and determinations of eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places.

Underwater archeologist preparing to dive, Tombigbee River Multi-Resource District, Alabama. Pioneering work using remote sensing techniques to identify locations of steamboat wrecks was coordinated by the National Park Service on behalf of the Corps of Engineers.

We are all drawn to archeology because we like to find things; and having found them we next want to know what they mean. By studying the objects, structures, and symbols of the people who came before us archeologists can reconstruct the ways of life of past cultures. A recent *New York Times* editorial hailed archeology as "man's greatest library" because archeology alone provides us with knowledge of early man before the invention of writing. A lithic scatter, a campsite, and a village represent the pages, chapters and books of prehistoric peoples. But archeology can also give a clearer view of our own more recent cultural past. A privy or a filled cellar in a city lot can give us a unique glimpse into the daily lives of our ancestors who are so frequently overlooked in the history books.

When archeological sites and objects are destroyed, our ability to learn about the past is irreversibly diminished. A site destroyed represents a missing page, a blurring of the past. In order to insure that present and future generations can have access to a more complete history, the Archeological Assistance Division with the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, has been charged with overseeing and coordinating the national effort by Federal agencies to protect significant archeological and historic remains threatened by Federal projects or activities.

Because many Federal agencies whose actions may affect significant sites do not have adequate archeological staff expertise, the Archeological Assistance Program can provide invaluable technical assistance nationwide. With its staff of professional archeologists in Washington, and in the field, the division is in the unique position of being able to coordinate Federally sponsored archeological activities and to help other Federal agencies meet their legal responsibilities.

INTRODUCTION

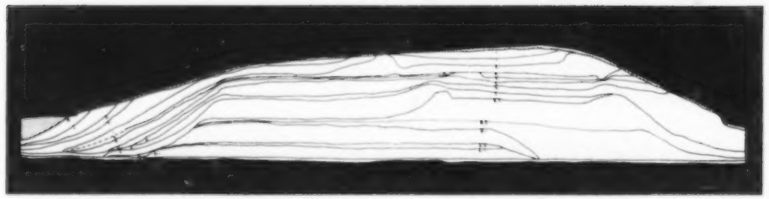
Cover illustration:

Dry-laid stone building, Bostwick Bar (foreground); reservoir construction (background); New Melones Archeological Project, California. The Bureau of Reclamation and National Park Service have cooperated to report on 18 years of research into the history of the Stanislaus River Valley.

ARCHEOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE FIELD OPERATIONS

Staff in Atlanta, Denver, San Francisco, Philadelphia, and Anchorage administer the archeological assistance program at the field level. Each office performs the following functions:

* Maintains close liaison with other Federal agencies at the regional level to identify and plan for needed archeological projects.
* Assists Federal agencies in planning for archeological resource preservation and management.
* Offers technical assistance to other agencies through training, review of program documents, contracting for archeological services, and other appropriate means.
* Investigates notifications to the Secretary of the Interior that Federal activities are destroying important archeological data.



Stratigraphy of Toqua village Mound A showing about 300 years of successive building stages, Tellico Archeological Project, Tennessee. Archeological preservation and research administered through the program's field offices are important contributions which increase the knowledge about our national heritage.

For additional information on the Archeological Assistance Program, write to:

U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Archeological Assistance Division
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